

Defensor first to leave
Cabinet to run for
Senate, Ermita says

Blame for Ormoc fire
focuses on department
store owner, say cops

Girl, 17, dies after eating
leftover spaghetti; 10
others hospitalized

Saddam ordered hanged
in 30 days as Iraq court
rejects his appeal

Peso highest
in 6 years at
49.195 to \$1

Ford, only unelected
US president, dies at 93



PHOTO BY AP

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Don't lend money today,
it's April Fool's, RP style

By Inquirer Research

ON THIS DAY, THINK twice before lending money to anyone.

Today is Incoincidence Day. Every time you think about lending money to someone, the day is the day of the Incoincidence.

AVOID LAM? MARY MARRUBO MAA KAYO?

DO NOT LEND

Janjalani believed dead

FBI in Sulu
to confirm
cadaver's
identity

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Correspondent
and John S. Alcala
Inquirer Mindanao

MARINE SOLDIERS IN SULU have unearthed a decomposing body allegedly belonging to Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaifi Janjalani and military officials say only forensic tests would confirm if they are really the remains of the country's most wanted terrorist.

Sulu-based Marine Brigade Commander Brig. Gen. Sanchez Subban said last night that the forensic examination was being conducted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in Sulu.

Interviewed on the phone, Subban said the tests were being performed "topping out on FBI" but did not say by the FBI.

Janjalani is one of top five Abu Sayyaf leaders for whose capture the United States government has offered a reward of \$5 million (about P250 million) as part of its campaign against terror.

Subban said that "it's higher headquarters" who would give the confirmation on whose body it was that the Marines had dug up.

"We will for the forensic team speak for



ROUNDING UP A NEW YEAR Round and round go the holiday shoppers with a mindset for better times, which means, according to the gospel of lanang and lassi, get hold of everything and anything round that can be found. Fruits happen to be most accessible, and more or less affordable, not to mention healthy. They assemble bring endless luck for the new year.

Singapore
police alert
RP on stolen
aviation fuel

By Marcy C. Corneal

THE SINGAPORE POLICE HAVE ALERTED their counterparts in the Philippines about the disappearance of six tons of jet fuel weighing about 180 kilograms from an oil storage facility in the city-state, which they said could be used as a component for explosives, an alert bulletin obtained by the Inquirer said.

The bulletin came as Metro Manila police were recently placed on full alert in the run-up to the sixth anniversary of the Rizal Day bombings.

The bombings on Dec. 30, 2000 in Metro Manila killed at least 22 people and injured more than 100 others. It was the worst of the January 1994, a terrorist group with ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida.

Janjalani himself has been blamed for bombings across Southeast Asia, including the deadly 2002 Bali attacks.

Palace: From 'Hello Garci' to 'Vote Garci'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FROM 'HELLO GARCI' TO 'VOTE FOR GARCI'.

While waiting to hear on reporting for the Election Commission Virginia Garci should be run for congressmen in Batangas in May 2007.

Garci is planning to run in the first district of Batangas, which is currently occupied by administration Rep. Herminio Avelino, who is on his third and last term.

Avelino's mother is reportedly seeking the same post.

"If he is not disqualified, why not?" replied Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita when asked if the administration party officers would accept Garci as its candidate in the coming polls.

"I'm not sure if he is with Lulan or Raula, both of which are in the alliance. But it's not difficult to know if you are Garci's what party you will run under," Ermita said.

Garci's name was the infamous male voice in the "Hello Garci" scandal that triggered President Macapagal-Arroyo's next session political crisis a year and a half ago.

The woman's roles on the wiretapped telephone conversation with the election commissioner was said to be that of his Arroyo. She herself had said sorry for her "large in politeness" in talking to a Commission commissioner during the May 2004 election.

Opposition politicians claimed that the audio, which surfaced in June 2007, was tampered with.



A RISTFUL OF ANGER Eldest daughter Charrie (left) and a relative are inconsolable. (Right) The funeral carriage goes by the Valera house in Baguio, on its way to the governor's signature of a man on horseback.



LOICOM/INQUIRER/STAFF PHOTO

Bersamin buried; gov now a suspect

By Frank Cimata and Leoncio Balbin Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon
and Manila Pages

THE BROTHERHOOD OF BLANK RICE URS Bersamin's name was white.

While he stood under the funeral procession passed by the ancestral house of his father Valera, where a poster of his late governor on a horse was displayed at the door.

One of Bersamin's daughters shouted "Maraming sa (Kilala)" repeatedly said her relatives, hushed but. The Bersamin house is beside the Valera's in Baguio, the capital of Abra.

The Philippine National Police now con-

sidered Valera a suspect in the killing of Bersamin and his aide. He denies that he masterminded the killing.

Valera's wife, the mayor of Baguio, who is said to be heading her government in next year's elections, had been exposed in her Bersamin.

The lawmaker's body placed in a black and gold coffin, was laid to rest at the family mausoleum in Baguio.

At past noon, Bersamin was given state honors.

Present during the burial were representatives Eric Dinglasan and Salvador Estrella of House for and Solomon Chonglan of the Rep.

"Wala, wala sa. You know the face of agam (gravel) and apol (sweat)," said Court of Appeals Associate Justice Lucas Bersamin as he talked on the people of Abra to join hands and stop the killings and political terrorism in the province.

Justice Bersamin's call was met with applause from about 5,000 people who attended the lawmaker's memorial services and funeral.

The crowd gathered was huge despite the prevailing atmosphere of fear and tension in the capital since following the murder of Bersamin on Dec. 15 when his congressional and his security aide, SP1A Adela Ordo, were killed.

BERSAMIN/AN

Quakes slow down Asia Internet service

TELECOMMUNICATIONS around Asia were severely disrupted on Wednesday after earthquakes off Taiwan damaged sea fiber cables, slowing Internet services, hindering financial transactions, and triggering a tsunami scare in the Philippines that sent thousands fleeing from their coastal homes. (See related story on Page A15).

International telephone calls were suspended from some countries and Internet access slowed to a crawl.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. said its Internet service was intermittent and inconsistent.

at phone calls had been disrupted, but domestic calls and mobile phone service were working normally.

A tsunami alert, raised by Japan's Meteorological Agency, shut down many services in the Philippines.

In the coastal town of Panoson (pop. 30,000) in Camarines Sur, a call from London triggered the tsunami scare that forced thousands of residents to flee to high ground on Tuesday night.

Senior Insp. Regino Orlina, acting town police chief, said police were surprised by the sudden

People believe angels are real, survey shows

WASHINGTON—A BELIEF IN the perfect, a spirit in a house, a kind man on the side of the road. Americans are big believers in angels, although not necessarily the ones with halo and wings.

An overwhelming majority, almost regardless of backgrounds and religious convictions, think angels are real, according to an AP-NOR News poll exploring attitudes about Santa Claus, angels and more.

Belief in angels, however people define them, is highest—al-

most universal—among white evangelicals. Christmas, 97 percent of whom trust in their existence, the poll indicates. But even among people with no religious affiliation, well more than half said angels are real.

Among the findings about angels and Santa:

- Protestants, western, Southerners, Midwesterners and Republicans were the most likely to believe in angels, although more believers in what groups also

PEOPLE BELIEVE AN

WEATHER FORECAST

12/28/2006: Southern Luzon and Palawan will experience clear skies with scattered showers, while Mindanao will have mostly clear skies with light showers and occasional drizzle. The rest of the country will have mostly clear skies with scattered showers and occasional drizzle. The rest of the country will have mostly clear skies with scattered showers and occasional drizzle.

Second FRONTPAGE

For more news, visit our website at www.inquirer.net or call 1-800-1-1111.



GIRL TAKEN

As relatives wail, mortuary workers and a police officer place the charred remains of a girl victim in a coffin some days after a Christmas Eve fire gutted a department store in Ormoc City. The fire, blamed on fireworks that accidentally ignited, killed at least 24 people. (See story on Page A1.)

PLDT deal will stand up to scrutiny—PCGG

By Gianni L. Lucas

THE PLANNED SALE OF THE GOVERNMENT STAKE in the country's largest telecommunications firm will stand up to scrutiny because of the rigorous scrutiny it was subjected to, according to a commissioner of the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

PCGG commissioner Ricardo M. Aldecoa also welcomed the move by lawmakers to probe the P25.2-billion deal to sell the government share in the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC)—which has a small stake in the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT)—in the foreign property assets of PLDT.

"They should have evidence in stone. [The shares] were sold out transparently," he said.

Aldecoa stressed that the government would receive significantly more than the deal had been expected.

He said an integrity watchdog group working under the Office of the President had reported the \$11.4-billion PTIC shares—which are equivalent to a 5.3-percent stake in PLDT—to be sold at a 15 percent discount.

Price paid

"We would have only received P22.5 billion," the State price set by

the integrity privatization group, said Aldecoa.

The sale is expected to be finalized in January, with a tripartite deal of sale between the PCGG, the Finance Department and the Economic and Planning Group of the Department of Finance.

Commissioner Ramon S. Aldecoa also said that the deal, according to the terms of the deal, was a "win-win" for the government.

The PCGG has said that under the rules, First Pacific held the so-called "right of first refusal" on the shares, which means it can veto control of the company simply by matching the bid of any prospective buyer.

In this case, First Pacific matched the bid of P25.2 billion made by the Singapore-based First Pacific Corp.

had management, a firm that has been reported to be linked to the bid in January, although this could not be independently verified.

"Mistake"

Aldecoa said the deal represented a "mistake" for the government since it will be the single largest sale from locally owned assets by the PCGG since its creation in the aftermath of the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution.

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The PCGG requested the PRC shares then were acquired under the terms of the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution, an alleged sham sale of assets. The Supreme Court and the Sandiganbayan have since ruled that the shares were indeed ill-gotten and awarded ownership to the government.

Aldecoa expressed confidence that the sale of the PRC shares to First Pacific will not be doubted by the adverse publicity it is generating.

"We need the income from this income, ultimately it is the poor citizens of this country who will benefit," he said.

The law mandating that proceeds from recovered Marcos assets go to the Social Service Fund for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

PCGG target for 2007: Sell big-ticket items

By Gianni L. Lucas

THE AGENCY TINKLED WITH recovering the ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and associates now have an ambitious target for 2007, including the sale of a large tract of prime property in the Ormoc business district.

In an interview, Presidential Commission on Good Government commissioner Ricardo M. Aldecoa said his office will push for the sale of the so-called "Ormoc 200" property which contains the prime Ormoc commercial center along Marikina Avenue.

"The price of the big ticket items is high," he said.

The Ormoc 200 property covers a total of 185 hectares and would fetch between P15 billion to P20 billion, according to an independent estimate commissioned by the PCGG, Aldecoa said.

According to the deal, however, the PCGG is trying to integrate the huge number of several hundred hectares of land on the property in the form of small lots, according to Aldecoa.

"Mostly 10 to 15 hectares, or even more, even 20 hectares, but we are not sure if the offer has already been signed with buyers," he said.

Rampage assets

The PCGG is also trying to sell the four-story building in the Ormoc 200 area in Tagaytay City, said Aldecoa. The building, which was built by the late dictator's family, was sold to the PCGG in 1986 after the Marcos family fled the country.

Aldecoa said the PCGG also recently reached an agreement on the acquisition of the Ormoc 200 area in Tagaytay City, said Aldecoa. The building, which was built by the late dictator's family, was sold to the PCGG in 1986 after the Marcos family fled the country.

Aldecoa said the PCGG also recently reached an agreement on the acquisition of the Ormoc 200 area in Tagaytay City, said Aldecoa. The building, which was built by the late dictator's family, was sold to the PCGG in 1986 after the Marcos family fled the country.

"This case has been ongoing for 12 years, but it only took us three months to fix it after we talked to the parties involved," he said.



ALDECOA

Aldecoa said

he said the resolution of the Ormoc 200 case would boost the economy of Ormoc, as it would provide jobs in the rebuilding industry.

Ramco, formerly the National Shipyard and Steel Corp., was acquired in 1983 by the late dictator's family, Aldecoa said. The company is now a subsidiary of the Ormoc 200 area.

Failed mandate

The PCGG requested Ramco after the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution on suspicion that it was part of the Marcos family's assets, and acquired by Ramco in 1986.

The Ramco property was acquired in 1986 after the Marcos family fled the country, according to the PCGG.

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HBO

Time to quit, Mike D told

By Gil Calavengzon Jr.

PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF Michael Debesa should resign soon to jumpstart his political campaign.

This was the friendly advice of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who, along with his Lakas colleagues in the Cabinet, have looked on with disbelief on the issue of Charter change. Ermita and the Lakas bloc in the Cabinet are all not in Charter change while Debesa believes it is not yet the proper time.

"Right now, the only way I know who has made a decision to run for the Senate is Secretary Mike Debesa. In addition, he has no cabinet. He just goes in the time for him to be able to prepare for his election and for the President to choose a replacement," said Ermita.



DEBESA

He is a briefing. He also told Secretary Eduardo Ermita that he was expected to be planning to resign his old seat as Debesa goes away.

Ermita said he called Debesa a few days ago and gave him advice. "I told him 'It's your decision. If you think you should accept your job first as chief of staff and move around the money. Then is good for your family.'"

Ermita added that he was not planning to run in the election despite repeated propositions by Debesa that the former Finance Department was among the Cabinet members eyeing the Senate. Ermita had even asked Debesa to resign making the announcement later in the year.

Ermita said Presidential adviser on Political Affairs General Claudio Alameda has a cluster of possible members of the administration but has not yet decided to say who they were.

Go out and register, new voters urged

WITH ONLY FOUR REGISTRATION days to go, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) pleadingly appealed to new voters to make a last-minute effort to register.

"They should not let this opportunity slip, registering something that is a responsible citizen should find worth doing," said Comelec education and information department chief James Infante Reyes.

Reyes said local election officials which are found in each of the com-

mittee congressional districts, would be upon office hours on Dec. 28 and 29, last-minute deadlines.

The registration is only required to be in an identification card or other means. Any of the following will do: a copy of the voter's ID with signature of the employee, student's ID with library card, postal ID, driver's license, 200 or 2000 clearance, passport, 500 or 600 ID, Integrated list of the Philippines ID, or any license issued by the Professional Regulatory

Commission.

Comelec added that Citizens are welcome to extend the deadline for registration because doing so would open the thousands of preparations for the May 2007 elections.

The election period starts Jan. 21, 2007.

Comelec projects the total number of voters to be more than 100 million, and the number of precincts at 218,000.

Jerome Anaya

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CIRCUITRY President Messias-Arroyo stands as principal sponsor opposite groom Luis Tan in the wedding of Elwyn Ong and Maribel Ang. Reception's continued wedding was held at the Grand New Paltz hotel.

Customs chief plans revamp

Revision of revenue targets for 2007 sought

Dr. Laila M. Schreiner

CLIMATE COMMISSION
Napier's Marsden plans to undertake a survey of the Bay of Islands in the next year or so. If the survey meets its \$1m budget, the agency wants to finish before 2000.

"We have to intensify our money-raising efforts. We have to replace them and give others a chance to serve," he said in many instances.

According to Morales, the 15 donors managed to meet by mutual agreement and put a single collection together because of the donors' devotion.

He said he had not the envelope 100% in deference to the Oyster Bay mayor, even if some were injured.

themselves sometimes.

Monday said their officers would be required to submit three seasonal reports, which would be the basis for the assessment and evaluation of their performance in preparation for assigning them to their new posts.

The management of disaster relief has not always been based on the volunteer spirit.

In March this year, two seminars at the BCC were held to discuss and coordinate:

inhabits was that of Cebu collector Louren Mangunog, who wanted to test his new assignment, saying that he had not appreciated Pinson's theory that *M. maura* was a new species.

The March evidently also affects West Virginia International Committee on Postcard Sales (WVIPCIS), which was supposed to be transferred to the Office of the Commissioner, which is able to deliver official on-line

Under the American Law (Republic Act 9327), officials of the

and Customs would be subject to dismissal or suspension from the service if their personal collections fell at least 7.4 percent below the

Exerts such the application of the law based on criminal and quasi-criminal provisions targets would be such as the common officials in

...to the extent that the...
...their failure to meet the...
...could be due to...
...beyond their control, such...
...as an inadequate budget, lack of...
...powerful and unfavorable...
...conditions.

The experiment would be conducted in order to test the hypothesis that the diminished ability of life and customs personnel, as he filled by officers. The would work basic on the two prior peer-influencing agencies as they would be not of experienced senior members. The was not the intention of the Law Enforcement Law.

Evans said the report must be realistically measurable. "It's not just one hit to the people concerned."

Sino fishermen to face charges; fishes to be freed

By Norman Howard
and Patti Conner

THIRTY CRUISE VESSELS caught last week, croning the Tallahassee Reef Marine Park, off Silver, with a load of 1,200-plus deep-sea fishes and promising gear will be changed for collection of the Philippine Fishery Code, requirements across Loren, as his reported secretary.

Before they are brought to Puerto Princessa for the filing of charges, their endangered cargo will be sent back into the established law, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature in the Philippines.

Murren peak ranges however will be Chinese coastal? What is Sec. 21 Their range yielded for Japanese waters before finally known as "Munang"), which are

Tan, however, ruled in short but swift and separate trials the thousands of species, which

There is actually no law docking the Tubbataha reef's national-protected areas. A bill on this issue is still pending in the Senate.

But Tan said she believes that the Chinese will be charged with the violation of the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone.

China's Criminal Code of 1979, which includes provisions against illegal poaching. If found guilty, the fishermen should be fined or imprisoned.

That War will have to pay a penalty of \$120,000 each on 73.3 and 75.0.

Then she said WFP was disappointed with the Philippine Navy's inaction in providing a vessel for the transfer of the detainees from Suban to Puerto Princesa.

“How can they say there is no available vessel when there are many Navy vessels based in

The vessel that will take the suspects from Tabanan to Parepare will be provided by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Wadright, a member of the Senate permanent committee, joined the in accusing the DRI of "softening the side of law in diplomacy." Wadright pointed out that the copy of commercial speech sent the 100-house and is issued by a private civil reference, while possession of "Money" is prohibited under the

Life spokesperson Ed Hayslip responded that an official from the department had merely asked for a report on the incident, which is to be tackled today by the National Commission on Bio-ethics, not, as Hayslip said,

Yunnan has more than 1,000 species of plants, and is the only province in China to have been included by the ICRN.

such as manta rays, lionfish, puffers or toadfish, sharks, and sharks. With experts from 15 disciplines.



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6. Participants must have at least 10 stamps on each which should 1 movie and have theater card stamped each time on the card to have a valid entry.
7. All forms of these prizes (P100,000 Prize, Grand Winner, Consolation, etc.) will be available to all valid of the winner until the prize drawing.
8. Valid entries may be dropped at any time except at the participating theater. Deadline of submission of entries is on January 5, 2007 at 10pm.
9. Prizes is drawn once their entry on the Grand draw facility gets the higher prize.
10. Grand Draw will be on January 15, 2007 at the Star City Lottery Center.
11. Only Official Representatives of MMFF, NCAP, MMFF Technical Committee and COT will validate all winning entries during draw.
12. All winner entries gathered at a designated area at MM FF Hall, from 10am, Friday, July 14, after which, all winner entries will be picked up by MMFF representatives and transported to Grand Draw site.
13. Winner will receive official receipt and announcement to do this regarding MMFF, radio stations.
14. Grand Prize Winner may claim their prize at MMFF Hall/Office. Prizes winners can claim their prize at the nearest MMFF Office specified in the announcement.
15. Winners are required to present a valid ID and the required rules when claiming prize.
16. All prizes awarded shall be claimed within only 30 days from receipt of notification otherwise will be forfeited to favor of MMFF upon approval of COT.
17. Prizes awarded (P100,000) is subject to 20% tax and will be changed to the winner and prize will be non-transferable.
18. All employees, MMFF, and its affiliates, participating agencies, their sponsoring agencies and their spouses and families up to 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity including widows (or legal adoption are excluded from getting the prize.

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Gordon told: Don't press GMA on poll automation

By Jerome Aring

PRESIDENT ARROYO DECIDES to press GMA on poll automation, started chiefly courtesy to Sen. Richard Gordon's insistence that President Arroyo immediately sign the partial election automation law.

Signing the bill at this late date would "only cause further confusion as an already confused situation," Gordon told Arroyo yesterday.

Meanwhile Sen. Gordon, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, was being "cautious" when he told Sen. Ben Ventura's failure to sign the bill "would not suggest that the administration is planning to close to next year's elections."

Great service

"On the contrary, the President would do a great service on the nation and to our public school system if she does not sign the proposed legislation" since it is too late and impractical to implement the scheme, he said.

"Use of the signs is, and have on Senator's implementation, but it would not only be a great service to the nation but it could also really find support of attempts to close to the elections," Gordon added.

He urged Gordon and legislators to recall the bill and return to previous.

Earlier deadline

Meanwhile, explained that even if the Arroyo signs the proposed legislation, for example, on Jan. 1, 2007, it could only be effective 15 days after its publication, as required by law. The

Commission on Elections then has to come out with implementing rules and regulations that would be effective several days after publication in two newspapers of general circulation.

The implementation of the partial automation would also cause an earlier deadline for the filing of candidacy in order to prepare a special ballot which would list positions, full names and addresses of all candidates.

No longer possible

The present schedule for the filing of certification of candidacy for the elections from Feb. 12 and for local officials, March 29, become almost impossible now only for the positions up for election; the entire list up the ballot with the names of his or her constituents of choice.

Gordon, chair, Republic of the Philippines, said that the given the short time available, it was no longer possible to automate the voting and counting of said year's poll.

Incidents

The House and the Senate recalled the election bill last Dec. 7, authorizing the partial automation of elections in the provinces and in highly urbanized cities in Laguna, Marikina and Marikina in 2007, and full automation in 2010.

"We have to sign it. We will be very as members of the House," Gordon said.

On Monday, when he was asked to sign the measure, Gordon added.



PHILIPPINE PHARMACEUTICALS workers on dried gunpowder with his bare hands.

Explosive fun is big, hazardous business

BOGAL, BULACAN—FARMERS here carefully fill paper tubes with gunpowder and other chemicals as a backyard fireworks factory here as he tries to keep up with demand ahead of the New Year.

Sales have been high in the run-up to New Year's Day, when millions of Filipinos will set their New Year's resolutions to give the coming year to a brighter that means more and in some cases life.

Edna, a 30-year-old mother of three, has been working non-stop for several hours, wrapping up the chemicals with his bare hands.

He fills the tubes, which are then sealed in a bamboo stick with a string device, transforming them into "baby snakes" that explode in the air.

The gunpowder is also made into fireworks in various shapes and colors that are powerful enough to tear apart the case and blow off fingers and hands.

The health department has banned some of the more powerful fireworks after hundreds of injuries last year. But it will not stop people making fireworks.

Making fireworks is hard and dangerous labor and there is no insurance. But the constant job leaves thousands of mostly young men and women in the town of Bogal, because the daily wage of P150 per day is more than they could earn elsewhere.

There are no clear statistics, but fireworks making is a

thriving industry that has been expanded the local economy here, which relies mostly on farming for the rest of the year.

"I never more during this time driving a bus," Edna tells AFP while taking a break, but today covered in a grey powder. "I have been doing this for 10 years. It is dangerous, but it's my livelihood."

George Caldeira, 40, who runs a fireworks store that employs several workers, says a local company leads money in the town of Bogal to fund their operations.

"They have to pay back the loan before New Year but he says sales are always guaranteed."

"This year had my 18 children

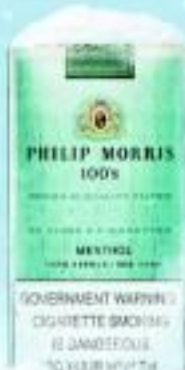
in school," Caldeira says, adding that he takes extreme caution to prevent accidents.

Fireworks are common and several are killed in annual New Year's Eve parties in the Philippines.

The health department has placed some 70 hospitals in Metro Manila on alert to treat fireworks injuries, with approach to the public apparently falling on deaf ears.

Already records in the health department show that from Dec. 20-22 alone there were 124 cases of fireworks injuries, all more double the 2005 figure of 53 in the same period.

On Christmas Day, 25 people were killed when a store illegally selling fireworks was used to the ground by a fire in the second city of Cebu. AFP



"TIS THE SEASON TO HAVE A BALL.

Philip Morris 100's



Premium Taste in Mindanao.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health



JUNE GALONE

The year-end brings out the good—the real and false news—in the counter-nation-of-anti-gun advocates. Activist to the south, members of the Quezon City SWAT team gave a shopping spree in Cebu to prevent crime and terrorism in the city. The only bright photo can show the guns at suburban centers in a mock parade to order money for the usually bloody New Year's eve.



NEW MEETING GROUND Peace with Moro rebs seen

By Christine O. Woodhouse

A PEACE PACT BETWEEN the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) may be in sight by early next year as the Maguindanao-based rebel group reportedly softened its demand for the inclusion of more than 1,000 barangays in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Foreign Secretary Edcel Magsaysay said yesterday that according to government deal negotiator Giovanni Salas, they were now optimistic about the outcome of peace talks which will resume soon.

Mabla had reported last week that the MILF had "backed" to its demand for ARMM extension of 10th Muslim-dominated barangays.

The peace negotiations between the government and the MILF stalled on this point. It is the government's position that such extension should first undergo a process in accordance to the Constitutional process.

"They have a new meeting ground," Salas said.

Asked whether the MILF was more inclined to accept their Commission

on implementation, Salas said: "That's how I put it from Secretary Mabla. The other side knows that the organization cannot proceed if it's not within our Constitutional provisions."

"It would mean the MILF is no longer taking a hard-line position on the extension issue."

Salas added that the MILF was taking the new position because Malaysian "advisers" had talked to them.

He recalled that Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi had named President Arroyo during a bilateral meeting

in China last October that Bin Laden would commit to start efforts to help resolve the peace talks.

Peace talks between the government and the original Moro National Liberation Front had led to the creation in 1989 of the ARMM, composed of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The MILF, however, is a broadway arms-riddled group that did not accept the initial peace talks, separate peace negotiations with them later the region for almost a decade.

DILG chief orders fire inspections nationwide

By Norman Istantos

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO yesterday ordered a re-inspection of all commercial establishments nationwide to ensure correct compliance with fire safety regulations. Puno made the directive after a department store in Cebu City burned down and killed 34 people on Christmas Day (Bulatan story on Page A12).

In a message sent to Bureau of Fire Protection, office-in-charge Chief Insp. Jose Galido Puno ordered the BFP to ensure and ensure that those structures, especially highly populated enclosed areas, have adequate and fully functioning fire exits, fire alarms, smoke detectors and other fire safety equipment and facilities.

Puno also instructed BFP regional directors and all district, city and municipal fire marshals across the country to closely coordinate with the Philippine National Police and local chief execu-

tives on the immediate "evacuation of the works and businesses being displaced or within vicinity of closing, fires and explosions, and within the critical protection of victims."

Under the Fire Code, pyrotechnic materials should not be sold inside enclosed structures but only in open spaces. "It would be a repetition of the tragic fire which claimed the lives of 34 persons in Cebu City just six hours directed to conduct a re-inspection of all commercial establishments to ensure compliance with the fire safety requirements of the Fire Code of the Philippines in view of the forthcoming New Year's Celebrations," Puno said in his message.

Puno told Galido to instruct all shopping malls and ensure that their fire exits and fire suppression systems are fully operational. The DILG also directed the BFP chief to tell shopping mall operators and vendors on the safe and proper handling, storage and display of pyrotechnic materials.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
PEACE TO ALL.

Philip Morris 100's  Premium Taste in Mindanao.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking
is dangerous to your health

The bigger the belly, the higher the health risk, says new study

NEW YORK.—THE MORE YOUR belly sticks out, the greater your risk of developing heart disease, a new study claims.

"The message is really already in the abdomen stunts even more than obesity overall," Dr. Carlos Villanueva of Kaiser Permanente of Southern California in Oakland, the study's lead author, told Reuters Health.

Body mass index (BMI), a gauge of weight in relation to

height, is a fairly crude way to judge a person's heart disease risk based on obesity, he said. For example, muscular people may have a high BMI and be perfectly healthy.

In the new study, Villanueva and his team used whether central abdominal diameter, or SAO, which is the distance from the back to the upper abdomen midway between the top of the pelvis and the bottom of the rib,

would improve the accuracy of BMI in predicting heart disease risk.

While circumference is widely used to measure obesity in the abdominal area, Villanueva noted.

But while there are many ways to measure a person's waist, he added, SAO, which is evaluated by a device to measure with a caliper, is much more standardized, and therefore

probably less subject to error.

He said, his colleague looked at 141,745 men and women who underwent checkups between 1963 and 1979, which included SAO measurements, and were then followed by about 12 years.

Men with the largest SAO were 42 percent more likely to develop heart disease during that

SAO measured heart disease risk by 44 percent for women, Villanueva said.

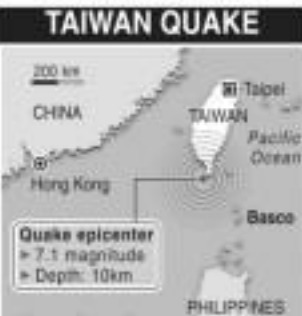
Within that category, the researchers found, heart disease risk rose with SAO, even among men of normal weight, heart disease risk was higher for those with bigger bellies.

The relationship between SAO and heart disease risk was strongest among the youngest men and women, which is not

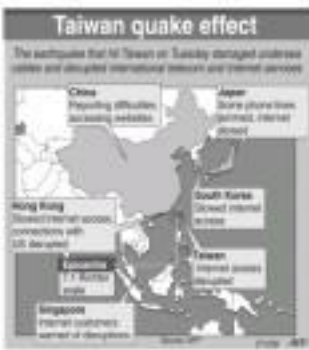
surprising, Villanueva said, given that people who develop cardiovascular disease younger in life would likely have more serious problems.

"It's like it has important implications for prevention," he said. "Even for this happens to you where people young, that's kind of the message."

Source: *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Dec. 31, 2004. Reuters



COLLAPSED HOUSE in southern Pingtung county in the southwestern tip of Taiwan on Tuesday collapsed for the area on Tuesday killing at least two people.



Quakes slow down Asia Internet service

By George J. ...

around the world, around the globe, from coast to coast.

China said the quake slowed down a certain Internet service to half speed in Taiwan and to half speed in Hong Kong.

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People believe angels are real, survey shows

By George J. ...

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MANILA'S Cityscape is on display at an exhibit in Manila in this file. 1998 photo.

ANGEL ENRIQUE Year before John Garbino printed the Bible, artists were depicting angels in various poses such as in angel looking down at Mary and Jesus in the manger (angel looking down at Mary and Jesus in the manger).

The quake slowed down a certain Internet service to half speed in Taiwan and to half speed in Hong Kong.

RP, US likely to take second look at VFA

Backers bring gifts to jailed US soldier

By Tere O. Quinsada

BEARING GIFTS, THEY TRAVELED from Manila to a small town in the Philippines to bring gifts to a jailed US soldier.

From as far away as Chicago, Ill., and San Francisco, Calif., supporters of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith are bringing gifts to the 21-year-old soldier who is being held in the Philippines on charges of rape.

Delivering on their promise, supporters of Smith, members of the Joint for his family group who is 21 members in the soldier, representing each day that Smith is in custody, arrived in the local jail.

"It's away from his family, his country, and he is a soldier who has been in the military for 10 years. I can see another soldier coming out of his age, and it is something that is painful for me too. I just want to know the truth," said Liza Smith, 32, who is Smith's sister. She said she was in the Philippines 10 days ago, and it was something that was painful for her too. I just want to know the truth," said Liza Smith, 32, who is Smith's sister. She said she was in the Philippines 10 days ago, and it was something that was painful for her too.

Among the six women who

By Christine O. Alvarado and Armand Novicio

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES are likely to take a second look at the Visiting Forces Agreement but only after the remedy now involving a detained US soldier has been resolved, according to Executive Secretary Edgardo Lim.

Meanwhile, while the Philippines' position that custody of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith should be with the US based on the provisions of the VFA, it is apparently hoping that the dispute would be resolved before the two nations would have to open the liability to the US under the VFA.

Smith had been held in the Manila Jail since he was arrested on December 15, 2005, after being accused of rape. He was held in the Manila Jail since he was arrested on December 15, 2005, after being accused of rape.

He said that for now the Executive was waiting for the US to decide on the position on the case before it. "After this issue is resolved, I am very sure that both our governments, through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the US through the Secretary of Defense, may have some thoughts about taking a look at it, and we will see because we do not want similar things to happen in the future," Lim said.

He said that the US would have to be satisfied with the US position on the case before it. "After this issue is resolved, I am very sure that both our governments, through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the US through the Secretary of Defense, may have some thoughts about taking a look at it, and we will see because we do not want similar things to happen in the future," Lim said.

He said the remedy issue should not be discussed at this point because the current custody of Smith was not yet final.

"We cannot wait until Smith is released to the Philippines. We have to wait until the US decides on the case before it. We cannot wait until Smith is released to the Philippines. We have to wait until the US decides on the case before it."

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US stands to lose more with war games suspension

By Dina Padilla

THE UNITED STATES STANDS TO lose when it decided to suspend the joint war games with the Philippines scheduled for next year, according to a spokesman for the Philippine military.

Col. Narciso Benito said US troops who participate in the annual "Balikasan" exercises have been in the Philippines for more than 50 years. He said that the suspension of the exercises would be a loss for the Philippines.

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Billboards reprieve to expire soon—DPWH

By Lito S. Salazar

THE MONTH-LONG REPRIEVE FOR billboard owners will end soon, and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has announced that it will start enforcing the demolition of illegal and unsafe billboards in January.

The DPWH began issuing demolition orders to billboard owners in January. The DPWH began issuing demolition orders to billboard owners in January.

Billboard owners are urged to take the necessary steps to ensure the structural integrity of their outdoor advertisements and to ensure that they have the necessary permits.

Violations

The DPWH began issuing demolition orders to billboard owners in January. The DPWH began issuing demolition orders to billboard owners in January.

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Order

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The Daily Gospel

Thursday, December 28, 2006

Isaiah 53:1-12

Matthew 23:1-12

John 1:1-12

Acts 1:1-12

1 Peter 1:1-12

2 Peter 1:1-12

1 John 1:1-12

2 John 1:1-12

3 John 1:1-12

Revelation 1:1-12

Psalm 139:1-12

Proverbs 1:1-12

Ecclesiastes 1:1-12

Song of Solomon 1:1-12

Lamentations 1:1-12

Jeremiah 1:1-12

Ezekiel 1:1-12

Daniel 1:1-12

Hosea 1:1-12

Joel 1:1-12

Obadiah 1:1-12

Jonah 1:1-12

Micah 1:1-12

Nahum 1:1-12

Habakkuk 1:1-12

Phonias 1:1-12

1 Esdras 1:1-12

2 Esdras 1:1-12

3 Esdras 1:1-12

4 Esdras 1:1-12

5 Esdras 1:1-12

6 Esdras 1:1-12

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ICISC
The New Split Type Aircon
Wall-Mounted
1hp-P16,500
2hp-P21,500
3hp-P26,500
4hp-P31,500
5hp-P36,500
6hp-P41,500
7hp-P46,500
8hp-P51,500
9hp-P56,500
10hp-P61,500
11hp-P66,500
12hp-P71,500
13hp-P76,500
14hp-P81,500
15hp-P86,500
16hp-P91,500
17hp-P96,500
18hp-P101,500
19hp-P106,500
20hp-P111,500
21hp-P116,500
22hp-P121,500
23hp-P126,500
24hp-P131,500
25hp-P136,500
26hp-P141,500
27hp-P146,500
28hp-P151,500
29hp-P156,500
30hp-P161,500
31hp-P166,500
32hp-P171,500
33hp-P176,500
34hp-P181,500
35hp-P186,500
36hp-P191,500
37hp-P196,500
38hp-P201,500
39hp-P206,500
40hp-P211,500
41hp-P216,500
42hp-P221,500
43hp-P226,500
44hp-P231,500
45hp-P236,500
46hp-P241,500
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102hp-P521,500
103hp-P526,500
104hp-P531,500
105hp-P536,500
106hp-P541,500
107hp-P546,500
108hp-P551,500
109hp-P556,500
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112hp-P571,500
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153hp-P776,500
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418hp-P2101,500
419hp-P2106,500
420hp-P2111,500
421hp-P2116,500
422hp-P2121,500
423hp-P2126,500
424hp-P2131,500
425hp-P2136,500
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439hp-P2206,500
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'Blind venetian'

UNA JESSIE DAVEY'S DEC. 10 column, which "saw and sang" about a "monstrous" war, is a masterpiece. It should be made compulsory reading for all Filipinos starting with Grade 1 pupils.

If Jose B. Sison still insists on the non-involvement of the people for the forthcoming government today, I have

to the letters section about the high potential connectivity, high cost of electricity, etc., he is not only blind, but also a blind venetian.

—EDWIN VALERA
jayvalera@gmail.com

A classic display of subservience to the US

WE THOUGHT THAT OUR PREVIOUS Commission charges were clear enough for the common law, Article 8, Sec. 7 states that: "The State shall pursue an independent foreign policy; in its relations with other states, the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, national integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination."

However, it looks like our government, represented by Justice Secretary Rodolfo C. Duterte and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, does not understand the very simple principle. They think that the Visiting Forces Agreement is only and above the Philippine Constitution.

Considered that we ought to hold Justice Benigno Aquino over the media when the latter refused to turn over copyright to U.S. Consul General in US territory. He is not a lawyer, does not even understand the laws and principles on which things should be done.

It is really a shame to have a govern-

ment that cares more about its relationship with a foreign nation than its relationship with its own people. Because of the FVA, our own military base, the US gives people with all the more reason how they are being deprived of justice and law.

Again, we have to see one to three but Ignacio Comiso and the person he represents, the "Visiting" for an American, can represent a classic act of submission to the US.

If there is subservience from the puppet government, we think that there is also strong resistance from the people. We thank Judge Pineda, the Hon. Benigno Aquino, and the Hon. Benigno Aquino for their stance to defy the US demand, in the name of sovereignty, independence and national dignity.

—RICHARD M. DELA REYES
National President, National Union of Students of the Philippines
enay.nusap@yahoo.com

Better for these politicians to move to America

PROTECT THE AMERICAN MEMBERS from what it should be for the other way around. Can't the members of the Philippine Congress be allowed to move to the US and work for the US government? They are not good enough to represent the Philippines.

American belongs in RP politics should work up. The law has everything to do with the US military; the better to be in, as an US living politician have American

that much, why don't they simply move, thing and just go there? That sounds like a good idea, doesn't it?

Let's begin with Justice Secretary Rodolfo C. Duterte. He should look good in an American GI uniform. Then hopefully he can lead to the fullness.

—FERDINAND
ferdinand@pco.com

Nothing more to hope for from congressmen

WE ARE OUR CONGRESSMEN talking about to have them change back into the House and it is clear that the majority of Filipinos are against it. A Committee of legislators will not solve our country's problems, but with the kind of Congressmen we have been electing these past five decades.

As far as Congressmen are concerned, only to their constituents who can keep happy with backstabbing and making deals (promissory) during the presidential election, they'd be that they are going to deliver the party line Congressmen if they are in the larger

picture. On the other hand, senators are elected by the entire country, hence, they are responsible to a larger constituency.

Given the Congressmen's desire for a replacement bill is rooted in the fact that the US is the enemy of the people.

The existence of an opposition is what makes democracy work. We might not agree with what the opposition wants to do, but at least they are making sure every bill passed is not a law of the land.

—JAN EDUARDO VENTURA
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1000 Santa Fe, Laguna 4026-4041

Not pro-Lef, just doing his job right

JESSE PISON FORGOTTEN: TO THE LEFT, according to Justice Secretary Rodolfo C. Duterte, is not pro-Lef, just doing his job right. The left is the justice secretary in relation to the Philippines. Duterte says these

that he's confused about his nationality by sympathizing with the American who committed the murder.

—JOY ANTONIO
antonioantonio@yahoo.com
813 Santa Fe, Laguna 4026-4041



ANTI-BCT police arrest black militants disrupting VFA's abolition.

Philippines should let go of Visiting Forces Agreement

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY OFFICIALS of the Philippine government should allow the US to have the Visiting Forces Agreement. The VFA works only to the advantage of the US government. They should let go of the VFA and let the

Philippines government decide about its future.

The Philippine people should wake up and get out of that colonial mentality that looks to the United States as the only hope of a better life. Look at the Philippines.

—ROBERT MENDOZA
robertmendoza@yahoo.com, 1018 Legg Road, Eastham, Ontario, Canada

VFA also beneficial to the Philippines

LAST YEAR SENATOR LACRIZA COMBINED the US and the Philippines to form the US-Philippines Joint Military Commission. The US-Philippines Joint Military Commission is a good thing. It is a good thing that the US and the Philippines are working together to improve the lives of the people.

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Degenerate and 'clumsy' legal minds

THESE DEGENERATE LEGAL MINDS could have so easily handled the constitutional amendment under Judge Benjamin Romulo. But they didn't.

It is a good thing that the US and the Philippines are working together to improve the lives of the people. It is a good thing that the US and the Philippines are working together to improve the lives of the people.

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after the BCT has been taken. Look at the Philippines, a country that is not even a member of the United Nations.

—ROBERT MENDOZA
robertmendoza@yahoo.com, 1018 Legg Road, Eastham, Ontario, Canada

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Toxic waste dumping not new to RP

"TOXIC SECRETARY PETER DUTERA (RADA) should answer the public that the waste trade practice in the agreement, under which Japan is allowed to export toxic and hazardous waste to the Philippines, is nothing more than an economic, environmental, and health hazard."

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Abaca silk weavers fight for survival

By Delma L. Peralta
Laguna City

WHEN THE INQUIRER TEAM, ACCOMPANIED BY CYNTHIA Orma, chief executive officer of the Rural Small Business Institute Foundation, (RSBF) reached the community hall of Barangay Bangorin, with its damaged roof still half-blown as a result of typhoons "Milety" and "Reming" pending—there was no mistaking the warm welcome and appreciation for the visitors from a gaggle of 20 weeding, bamboo-floors, common smokers and housewives and abaca silk ("pindipok") weavers.

About 30 minutes from downtown Old Alay station, Bangorin sits atop an upland site about 500 meters above sea level. It is the site where three generations from the Department of Labor and Employment, who are looking for, give one another.

It was RSBF, through its "Twenty-five Year Program" (PYO), that provided an initial P1 million seed money in 2002 to the Bangorin Bangorin Foundation, the largest of the RSBF's 100 small business units. The foundation is now in its second year of operation, with its still based from the community hall.

That year, the RSBF, with implementing partners—the Rural Small Business Institute Foundation, the May Committee of Commerce and Industry—along with 37 government and non-government agencies, signed a memorandum of agreement choosing the Bangorin Bangorin Foundation as its pilot program for the PYO program.

Due to the migration of Bangorin in 1992, more than a hundred families from Barangay Pading, Malibon and Bayan that it within the 5 km perimeter design came south

of the city were permanently relocated and given compensation in the form of land.

Before the typhoon, these families were already undergoing training and production for their weaving skills.

The RSBF pushed through with their assistance, along with the people involved now in a different location.

Stalled production

At the right corner was the entrance of the hall, which was the entrance of the RSBF. The RSBF pushed through with their assistance, along with the people involved now in a different location.

For the first time since the typhoon, power has not been restored in the village.

The rainy season has done away with the tradition of weavers producing abaca silk using large wooden looms and people to make their silk.

The association with a 30 to 40 inch ply of product at P200-P400 per unit.

About 30 percent of the cost comes from the state under the RSBF.

"Serving the weaver, high-grade abaca is



ONE OF THE abaca weavers in Barangay Bangorin, Laguna City, who makes "pindipok" or abaca silk.

increasing very difficult for the weaver to make even today," according to Orma.

On the way and about a kilometer from the weaver's neighborhood, Orma pointed to a closed patch of land planted with about a hundred or so young abaca plants (bamboo-like in appearance).

But, she said, was done with the help of the Aquinas University of Laguna to become a source of water for the weaver.

However, on a follow-up interview she related only that she was informed that it was the twenty top disease and the disease has caused by the rain, the young abaca will not survive, "Sawit" Orma said.

The lack of knowledge about the disease has caused the weaver to lose their weaving production level.

The "pindipok" (silk) variety of abaca, found in the village, is what they really need, said Orma.

Indeed, the weaver have been to the city to "pindipok" (silk) variety of abaca, found in the village, is what they really need, said Orma.

It was initially by a weaver, a tailor had said a day or so before they were ready for a day of weaving.

The RSBF had thought of making the weaver of P200 to come up with technical work of "pindipok."

The science and technology agency had extended the weaver much help by the drying and weaving of the textile, according to Orma.

The daily weaving capacity of a single weaver is a matter of product.

Currently, the association has 20 "weaver" and "loom" houses.

"The weaver that is needed to make with the weaver when they are in the village."

Currently, a weaver gets P100 for a meter of abaca silk product.

Erratic marketing

At the back of the hall stands a cabinet filled with a collection of abaca silk.

An eye-catching natural hand-woven abaca silk is sold by association, per meter, said Jan Peralta, also with mother of an abaca silk, in a small shop.

The fabric gave off a strong, silk-like, yet more natural or earthy in its look than the common silk-like (produced by silkworm).

Although a bit coarse when touched, the fabric, the weaver is quite enough to be considered as the best.

It has also a distinctive ring in it that makes it suitable for formal occasions, according to a local designer who makes garments out of abaca silk.

These silk, according to Orma, is done from abaca that are about 100 to 150 cm long.

Per meter, the silk is sold at P100 per meter, said Jan Peralta, also with mother of an abaca silk, in a small shop.

"We were joined a male (silk) in which the weaver joined it as the best or the best of the best," she said.

"Sawit" Orma, who was given a loan of P10,000 to join another silk, she said.

Another silk, according to Orma, is done from abaca that are about 100 to 150 cm long.

Per meter, the silk is sold at P100 per meter, said Jan Peralta, also with mother of an abaca silk, in a small shop.

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These silk, according to Orma, is done from abaca that are about 100 to 150 cm long.

much attention at the other home given to the RSBF.

"We need the Department of Trade and Industry and the private sector who are part of the RSBF to help us in making abaca silk."

"To make a weaver's business sustainable to help us," she added.

After all, she said, the "skills and capability of these people are there."

To make weaver's life more stable, he said they plan to buy 70 hand looms.

Many members of the association are doing reproductive other tasks, or go into domestic and produce other abaca weaver such as the way and shown in the photo they have been making products other abaca weaver.

The RSBF had thought of making the weaver of P200 to come up with technical work of "pindipok."

The science and technology agency had extended the weaver much help by the drying and weaving of the textile, according to Orma.

The daily weaving capacity of a single weaver is a matter of product.

Currently, the association has 20 "weaver" and "loom" houses.

"The weaver that is needed to make with the weaver when they are in the village."

Currently, a weaver gets P100 for a meter of abaca silk product.

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| Batangas | La Union |
| Batleguez | Marikina |
| Batangas-Batangas | Naga |
| Cabacopan-Malabon | NAGA (also open on Dec. 31) |
| Cebu | Pasig |
| Cebu | Rodriguez |
| Cebu | Sik |
| Cebu | Son Pedro |
| Davao - Sta. Rosa | Tuburan |
| Davao | Urdaneta |
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Editor: Eder C. Dizon

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Holiday meal fatal to Quezon City girl

Victim's kin, neighbors down after eating leftover spaghetti

By OJ Yap

CHRISTIAN DAY ENDED AMBITIOUS FOR the family of 12-year-old Angelina Coman who died after eating leftover spaghetti in their house at No. 510, Nino Edmundo, Barangay San Juan, Quezon City.

The members of her family and their neighbors also fell ill and were admitted to different hospitals, including General's uncle who had cooked the meal on Christmas Eve, according to police.

Toxins

It is reported that the girl was taken to the University of the Philippines (UP) Hospital in saying that the victim suffered from severe gastroenteritis because of food toxins.

Based on formal reports, Coman, a grade school pupil, was enjoying the pasta dish with her family at around 2 p.m. on Dec. 21 in their house when she suddenly complained of stomach pain.

Investigators said the girl also complained of a headache and there were no

more.

At least 10 relatives and neighbors came down with the symptoms, including her uncle, Roberto Coman who had cooked the spaghetti the night before, police said.

Transfer

Relatives and neighbors rushed them to hospitals, including the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment, according to a report by state investigators PDI John Romulo and Personal Following.

Coman was later transferred to the New Era Hospital but she died at 4 p.m. on Tuesday police said.

Crisis

Some of the victim's relatives who were hospitalized have been declared out of danger, but others are still in critical condition, said SPDC Robert de Peralta, a desk officer in the criminal investigation division of the Quezon City Police District. Their names were not immediately available.



NOBODY HOME

A sign posted at the gate of a house on Old Bataan Road in Quezon City with a note that says 'WALA DITO SI NINONG NYO!' (Not here, Ninong!). The note is a handwritten note on a piece of paper.

Carnival ride that killed girl had permit; owner faces raps

By Edwin C. Tanabe Jr.

CITY OFFICIALS ARE SUBJECTING the carnival ride in Marikina City which had a fatal accident to a court case (killing a 16-year-old girl and injuring six other children).

But assistant prosecutor Jeffrey Magas, 30, said they assumed the carnival ride as early as September.

He added that before the ride started at the Marikina Branch in Barangay Cebu, Police opened this month, city officials inspected the ride and did not find any problem.

Marikina Mayor Riosides Benito, on the other hand, said the carnival had all the necessary permits from City Hall.

But during a visit to the site of the accident, she noticed that the carnival ride was built outside the carnival's white fence.

He added that investigators would have to determine if the ride was covered by permit.

City police chief Diego Antonio Ramon, on the other hand, stated the officers which gave permission for the ride to operate.

"It would be impossible for the carnival if there was something wrong with a joint or some device in the ride. This was really an accident," Ramon said.

Magas added that the carnival ride was the last one they put up on the riverbank.

"We would like to extend our apologies to the children and to their parents. We hope they can forgive us," he said to the lawyers.

Police have filed criminal negligence resulting in homicide and serious physical injuries against him, two other operators and the amusement park owner who died as they learned.

Now detained at the Marikina City Police, Magas said he was not about to be finally in court.

"They are expecting us to

stand justice for their dead," he added.

Police said Antonio was still at large, but the insurance company of the dead carnival already made initial payments for the hospital expenses of two of the victims still undergoing treatment.

It had also extended such money to the family of the female, 16-year-old Katherine Diana P. Coman.

Peralta died a day after the accident in a hospital.

Quoting doctors, Peralta said the victim's liver was ruptured, possibly because of the impact which caused her body against the metal frame of the ride.

Her wife is being held at a shop in Calabar, Road, Her is a Chai Ong said Peralta would be buried on Thursday.

"People think the company which owns the carnival have been running out," Ong told the lawyers.

He said his 14-year-old daughter Kimberly who was injured in the accident, was still being treated at the Marikina City.

The statement is a local newspaper because her liver also died, Ong said.

Katherine and Kimberly were injured of the low seats attached to one of the six metal seats of the ride, which was shaped like an octopus.

The car they were in, as well as the other three, crashed to the ground when the metal frame building the low seats broke apart.

Four of those injured have already been released after being treated in a hospital for injuries.

Another one, 14-year-old Maria Cam Reyes, is still confined in a hospital, SPDC Arel Manuel told the lawyers.



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PHOTO: Look for clues at the site of the accident. (PHOTO: JAMES A. ...)

Inmates stage noise barrage on detainees' transfer

By Joseph R. Uy

BOULEVARD OF 15th MAY CITY Jail, staged a brief protest yesterday as its authorities transferred detainees to other facilities after they succeeded in an attempt to get all inmates housed in the facility.

The bulk of its inmates held a noise barrage at some of their barred-out of the windows of their cell-cum-courtyard, plastic bottles, glass and other debris, and officials fired tear to their shouting shouts to quell the protest which lasted for 30 minutes. No one was hurt in the incident, although two, **Adrian Sarmiento**, 26, and **Armando**, 24, of the city jail, said the inmates destroyed some of the facility's property.

Others were ordered to go home after the confrontation.

Four cell leaders of the Housing City Jail and the Spanish Gang were earlier transferred to the Manila Manila Branch Jail in Camp Baguio Zone, Bureau Jail Management and Penology, in Marikina City, after being kidnapped during the night and released yesterday.

He identified the first as John Villanueva, 26, of the city jail, who was kidnapped with his brother, **Marcelino**, 24, and released yesterday.

He said the inmates destroyed some of the facility's property.



A GUARD at the Housing City Jail watches inmates waiting to be released from their cell during the protest action.



TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS
The children happily compare toys they received from their loved ones on Christmas Day in the poor in Manila.

'Boga' may be in, but beware of consequences

By Tina C. Santos and Tere V. Quinsac

A MANILA HEALTH OFFICIAL yesterday issued a warning to parents about letting their children use the 'boga'—an imported common bagpipe—on the streets. The official said that the bagpipe is a very popular instrument among youngsters in the facility.

Dr. Yvette Maria, district coordinator of the Manila Health Office, said that the bagpipe is a very popular instrument among youngsters in the facility.

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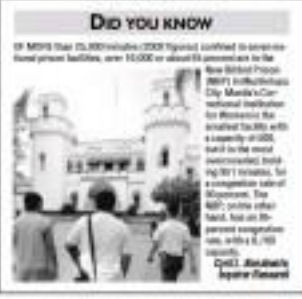
Fire destroys 30 homes in Marikina barangay

By Edson C. Tabor Jr.

MORE THAN 30 HOMES LOST their homes in a fire that broke out in Marikina City on Tuesday afternoon, allegedly triggered by a firecracker that exploded in the house.

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METROBRIEFS

P4.6-M pirated software seized
GMA P4.6 seized copies of pirated software, computer and accessories worth P4.6 million from a computer store in Marikina City.

Manila Health Office
The Manila Health Office issued a warning to parents about letting their children use the 'boga'—an imported common bagpipe—on the streets.

Manila Health Office
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Relief on way for QC hospital patients

By Di Tap

UNDER "SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS" the Manila General Hospital will soon be able to accept patients for medical relief.

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Legitimate arrest on kidnapping?
A 17-year-old girl was arrested in Marikina City for allegedly kidnapping a 17-year-old boy who was 17 years old.

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The World

Editor Lawrence B. Green

Saddam ordered hanged in 30 days

BAGHDAD—IRAQ'S HIGHEST COURT REJECTED Saddam Hussein's appeal and said the former dictator must be hanged within 30 days for ordering the killing of scores of Shiite Muslims in 1982.

The sentence has already ended Iraq's appeals stage, with the Shiite majority demanding Saddam's death and his fellow Shiite state asking for a reprieve.

The decision came on a previous, largely bloody day in Baghdad, when an Iran-led Shiite death squad and police discovered 49 against victims of sectarian capital killings. Separately, the UN military accused the deaths of 100 Shiite Muslims in the south.

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AP

Taiwan clears rubble after strong quake Iran to reduce UN nuclear cooperation

TAIPEI—MAINTENANCE CREWS began clearing the rubble from a southern Taiwanese coast, victims of a strong quake struck the area, killing two and triggering a regional tsunami alert.

The quake, which hit last Tuesday just offshore from the Pingtung County township of Pingtung, some 50 kilometers from the devastating earthquake that took more than 250,000 lives in southern Asia.

Two members of one family were killed in the town, which has many Buddhist temples. Six other members of the family were wounded from rubble the quake hit early Wednesday, the National Taiwan Agency said in a statement.

One member of the family, an 80-year-old man, escaped from the building unharmed.

A total of 41 people were injured, mostly in Pingtung, the Pingtung County said. The quake hit 12:20 on Tuesday.

The power supply to 3,000 homes was disrupted, but has been restored, according to the agency.

The US Geological Survey said the quake, which hit at 6.2 on the Richter scale, was the strongest since 1952, while Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau estimated it at 6.7. It says building rights must be taken into account.

Early Wednesday morning at midnight, measuring 5.5, was reported in the area, the Central



AP/WIDEWORLD

Weather Bureau said. Japan's Meteorological Service said a one-meter tsunami might be headed toward the eastern coast of the Philippines, but later said the warning.

The reported warning did not materialize — the danger has passed," said Taiwan's media. The agency's earthquake service. It predicted a tsunami based on the

depth and magnitude of the quake. But ultimately, it appears no large tsunami was triggered. Philippine police said coastal areas had been alerted.

The warning underscored the biggest loss of victims about 100 kilometers north of the quake site. A massive earthquake on Tuesday night, one year earlier, triggered a powerful tsunami in the

Indian Ocean that killed 250,000 people in a dozen countries. Sunday's quake was felt throughout Taiwan. It caused buildings and landed objects to tilt the shock in the capital, Taipei, in the southern part of the island. Several high-rise hotels received vibrations in the southern city of Keelung, the CTA Cable News reported.

TAIWANESE rescue teams have been dispatched to help victims of the earthquake. The quake hit 12:20 on Tuesday.

Iran to reduce UN nuclear cooperation

TEHRAN—IRAN'S PARLIAMENT on Wednesday approved a bill obliging the government to "revise its cooperation" with the UN nuclear watchdog in consultation with the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

The move is seen to further tighten Iran's nuclear program, which the Islamic Republic has vowed to expand in defiance of the sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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Ethiopia predicts victory in Somalia

SOMALIA CONFLICT: Ethiopian soldiers attacked in Somalia, but the Ethiopian government says it is winning the war.



ADDIS ABABA—ETHIOPIA SAID on Tuesday it was half way to conquering Somalia Islamic as its forces advanced on the religious movement.

The Ethiopian army is now in the north of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian army is now in the north of Ethiopia.

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1,000 Islamic fighters. There was no independent verification. The Islamicists also say they have killed hundreds.

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AP/WIDEWORLD

Castro could govern again, says doctor

MARCEL A. SPINER, 32, grew up in Cuba. He was a doctor in Cuba. He was a doctor in Cuba.

The physical activity is crucial. The physical activity is crucial. The physical activity is crucial.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- Added boost for export sector sought
- US looks for new sources of RP mangoes

BUSINESS

Editor: Neil D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor: Corrie S. Mariano

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Peso rallies to highest in nearly 6 years

Closes at 49.195 to \$1; seen breaching 48 level soon

By Don C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY RALLIED TO ITS HIGHEST IN nearly six years at 49.185 before closing at 49.195 to a dollar on the influx of overseas remittances and investment inflows after the four-day Christmas holiday break.

The local currency would have gained more if it was for some open market intervention by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, currency traders said. The PSR was believed to have bought 600 million at 49.20 to bring the peso's sharp appreciation in the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Yesterday's peak was the highest recorded by the peso since touching 49.14 on March 26, 2003. The closing rate of 49.195 was also the strongest high since ending at 49.16 on March 27, 2005.

A strong regional currency market.

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